

LADYSLIPPER, INC.



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Dear friends,

Enclosed you will find a copy of **GARDEN OF ECSTASY** by Kay Gardner, along with some materials about this unique recording, which has been acclaimed by such luminaries as Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, M.D. and Bernie Siegel, M.D.

Kay, well known for her research on music and healing, wrote "Viriditas", a major composition on **GARDEN OF ECSTASY**, as a possible healing tool especially for people struggling with AIDS. She has also given concerts in conjunction with various AIDS organizations.

Ladyslipper's goal is to make **GARDEN OF ECSTASY** more available to people with AIDS and other life-threatening diseases. We are a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, and we publish an annual Resource Guide of recordings by women and gay men.

We think your organization might be interested in using **GARDEN OF ECSTASY** as a fundraiser or as a listing in your newsletter/journal/resource guide. Some of our ideas are:

- *Your organization could purchase the cassettes and CD's at a wholesale discount, and resell them as a fundraiser
- *You could recommend the recording for a listing in any resource catalogs you work with or know about
- *You could reprint a press release and direct interested persons to Ladyslipper directly
- *You could make flyers available to people in your organization and field

Perhaps you have other ideas about ways to get the word out to the AIDS and health care communities about this resource.

If you are interested or have any questions please contact us at 1-800-634-6044. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Lisa Wedig and Laurie Fuchs

garden of ecstasy

kay gardner & sunwomyn ensemble

program notes

The compositions in my *Garden of Ecstasy* describe the colors, fragrances and sounds which have greeted me since I composed *A Rainbow Path* (1984). Rather than re-exploring a meditative path, my muse this time took me on a different, more active journey.

Garden of Ecstasy begins with three dance pieces. *Traveling* and *Tropical Flowers* were composed on the guitar in 1986. In *Traveling* there is a fusion of influences from both East and West combining a Hindu melody (*Saraswati raga*) over tamboura drone and Appalachian hammered guitar bass with the rhythms and harmonies of Latin America. *Tropical Flowers* too is an East/West fusion of sounds evocative of equatorial island cultures. The samba *Sun Dancer* came as one complete musical idea at the time of the Harmonic Convergence in 1987 when—according to North American native prophecy—400,000 sun dancers world-wide were to ecstatically greet an August dawn foretelling a major shift toward balance in world consciousness.

Viriditas (pron: Veerl-dee-tas) is a Latin word coined by the 11th Century German mystic and musician, Hildegard of Bingen. It literally means "greening power" and refers to her vision of healing, creativity and fruition. "All of creation and humanity is showered with greening refreshment, the vitality to bear fruit."

My intent in this three-movement work, composed in 1988 and dedicated to my dear friend Catherine "Bunny" Battaglia, is to take the listener through the emotion of despair to a cosmic feeling of joy and finally to a place of comfort and resolve.

It was the fight against AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and other life-threatening dis-eases that called me to write *Viriditas*. In my years of research on music as a healing force, including how particular tones and key centers affect the human organism, I determined that the composition would be centered around an F# tonic. This pitch, for most people, touches the mid-chest area of the body where the thymus, the "brain" of the immune system is located. It is also where the heart chakra, the energy center for healing and compassion, exists in the auric field surrounding the physical body. The colors associated with the heart chakra are both spring green and its complement, rose, inspiring the title *Viriditas*.

Maintaining F# as a tonic, I take different instruments playing in various world scales to melodically describe this healing journey. *Viriditas* begins with the English horn—an instrument especially suited to expressions of melancholy—stating the first movement's theme in the blues scale. The deep accompaniment instruments, bassoon and cello, illustrate the move to depths of feeling with both a downward-moving Native American scale and the East Indian Todi raga. Throughout this movement, indeed in most of the composition, the timpani play in a heartbeat rhythm.

My vision of how the first movement of *Viriditas* may be used by the person with life-threatening dis-ease is that it may enhance one's delving into the emotions of grief, fear, depression and/or anxiety which accompany the realization of one's

potential or impending death. Recognition of these emotions must be honored before any transformation may occur.

The scale in the second movement is the Lydian mode. This major mode with tritone (raised 4th), is especially otherworldly and takes us through a lyrical string theme—accompanied by harp and vibraphone—to ecstasy, an improvisational section where the instrumentalists employ harmonics and other cosmic effects. We return from this musically-induced state of altered consciousness to the timpani's grounding heartbeat and a restatement of the movement's theme on flute.

The second movement slowly changes character, musically lifting the listener's emotions from grief and loss to a state beyond physical awareness. It is here, in an out-of-body atmosphere, that the listener may see beyond human existence to the universal Source of true wholeness (holiness) and fearlessness. It is here that the listener may comprehend that there is no death, only transformation through Divine Love.

On returning from this musical "cosmos" with new perspective, the third movement of *Viriditas* may renew the listener with hope, acceptance, and resolution, whether it means one's passing on to a new level of existence or whether it means revitalizing one's life on this earthly plane.

The third movement brings us to resolution with themes in the Mixolydian mode, a scale said by Plutarch to have been invented by Sappho of Lesbos. This scale is familiar to our ears because of its use in the music of Appalachia, the Celtic countries, the Balkans, Greece and India, among others. Here we explore several themes—including one honoring the medieval composer/healer Hildegard—to end *Viriditas* in a state of hope.

For the structure of *Viriditas* I utilized a formula from sacred geometry, the divine proportion—a formula often used by the medieval composer Hildegard—to determine the work's formal design and the direction in which the composition takes the listener.

It is my hope that *Viriditas* may be of therapeutic assistance for people struggling alone with their dis-eases or for those working in therapy groups or individually with counselors or therapists. In these settings the recording may be used as accompaniment. Through its compositional intent and application of the healing properties of music, *Viriditas* may enhance and amplify transformational work done through self-awareness therapies.

Though *Viriditas* was originally designed as music for visualization or to accompany guided imagery for people with life-threatening dis-eases, it is by no means limited to that function. By journeying through globally-inspired melodies, shifting moods and a variety of orchestral textures, *Viriditas* may be experienced symbolically as emotional rebirth by all listeners.

Thanks be not only to Hildegard but also to the Green Tara, Tibetan goddess of compassion, who was my muse for *Viriditas*.

— Kay Gardner